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Assembly California Legislature



CHRIS NORBY

ASSEMBLYMAN, SEVENTY-SECOND DISTRICT

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APPROPRIATIONS
TRANSPORTATION
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

April 3, 2012

Elizabeth Garrett
Commissioner, Fair Political Practices Commission
c/o Office of the Provost, University of Southern California
Bovard Administration Building, Suite 102
Los Angeles, California 90089

Dear Commissioner Garrett:

I urge you to vote in favor of supporting Assembly Bill 2239, which I authored to increase candidate transparency while substantially reducing the need for independent expenditures. AB 2239 is part of item #17 on your April 5 agenda. FPPC staff has not taken a position on this bill.

Under current law, campaign finance reports are filed as infrequently as a semi-annual basis during non-election periods and every other month during pre-election periods. For example, a candidate on the ballot in June 2012 filed semi-annual statements in 2011 from January 1-June 30 and July 1-December 31 and pre-election statements in 2012 from January 1-March 17, March 18-May 24, and May 25-June 30.

My bill, AB 2239, will require that candidates report contributions and expenditures within 24 hours. With this more rapid reporting requirement, transparency will be greatly increased and will allow the public and watchdog organizations to better monitor the flow of political money and hold politicians accountable.

In 2000, California voters approved Proposition 34 in an effort to "put the brakes on special interest money" and "limit campaign spending." However, efforts to place campaign contribution limits on candidates has proven to be an abject failure. Since Prop 34 passed, independent expenditures have increased a stunning 6000%. Independent expenditures have reduced accountability and reduced transparency.

Prop 34's attempts to limit money in politics have had the unintended consequences of making money harder to trace and reducing candidate accountability. Ending the Prop 34 caps will render unaccountable independent expenditures and shadowy IE PAC's unnecessary, leaving candidates responsible for the contributions they receive and the spending they make.

Eliminating Prop 34 limits while requiring 24-hour disclosure of contributions and expenditures is the only way to hold politicians accountable to the public and render independent expenditures unnecessary, so I respectfully urge you to vote in favor of supporting AB 2239.

Sincerely,

CHRIS NORBY
Member, California State Assembly